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*The Life of Reverdy Johnson.* By BERNARD C. STEINER, Ph.D., LL.B. (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Company. 1914. Pp. v, 284.)

REVERDY JOHNSON was a distinguished American lawyer (1796-1876). He was descended from an ancestry of lawyers. He followed William Wirt at the Maryland bar, and took rank with these distinguished men in learning and ability. In his earlier days he was intimately associated with Roger B. Taney in the Maryland practice and later argued many important cases in the high court over which Taney presided. At the time of his death the general assembly of Maryland spoke of Johnson as "the foremost jurist of America", and great lawyers like Senator Edmunds, of Vermont, recognized in him one of the acknowledged leaders of the American legal fraternity. He was interested in politics and government; was a United States senator from 1845 to 1849; was Attorney-General of the United States under President Taylor; was a Maryland Union man and again a United States senator during the Civil War, wielding a large influence in keeping Maryland true to the Union; while in the Senate he was a moderate conservative of commanding influence in the era of Reconstruction, supporting the "Restoration theory" and President Johnson's plan of Reconstruction, and doing as much as any man to save President Johnson from conviction on impeachment; and he was for a short time under Johnson the minister of the United States to Great Britain.

This life of the lawyer and public servant, Dr. Steiner sets forth in a useful and well-balanced biography. The work is an elaboration of a sketch written for the series of volumes edited by Professor William Draper Lewis entitled *Great American Lawyers*. Its pages are not scintillating with human interest because Johnson's public utterances were usually dignified and stately, measured and learned, usually legal and constitutional in character, and they were not much marked with exciting incidents or dramatic style. But what may be lacking in vivid attraction is made up by solid worth in a biography that is very informing on the life of its subject and on an important period in American history. Dr. Steiner devotes a chapter to interesting incidents in the life of Johnson at the bar. In politics he shows Johnson as a pronounced conservative, a "peace" man who sought to avoid and restrain everything of an "ultra" nature. In his early Maryland life as state senator, he was a Jeffersonian Republican but later he became a Whig from principles of broad construction. In the forties he was repeatedly a delegate to Whig national conventions and Dr. Steiner's extracts from letters and reminiscences throw indicative side-lights on these campaigns and elections. Johnson favored the Mexican War but though personally an anti-slavery man, he opposed the Wilmot Proviso on constitutional grounds. He was always a stout defender of the "constitution" against innovation and change, and appeared always ready to permit

the slavery question to be settled by decisions of the Supreme Court. His influence is said to have induced Taney to give the noted political opinion in the Dred Scott Case. After the break-up of the Whig party in 1854, Johnson became a Democrat, following the fortunes of Douglas and popular sovereignty in 1860. He sought some means of compromise and peace at the break-up of the Union, but became a conservative advocate of the war. He opposed Lincoln's re-election in 1864 and was frequently a severe critic of the War President. In Reconstruction, Johnson steadily opposed the Congressional policy. He opposed the Freedmen's Bureau Bill and the Civil Rights Bill. He held that a person of African descent could not be a citizen under the Dred Scott decision, which he held to be good law; and he contended that short of an amendment to the Constitution, Federal citizenship could come only through the states—the states alone could say what persons shall be citizens.

The author traces with accurate care the conservative course of Johnson in the Senate, on all matters of public interest, showing him to be a consistent member of the opposition, opposing the Republican majority on all matters of historic moment. His record is carefully set forth not only on such notable matters as have been cited but on many matters of minor concern. Johnson's course was somewhat harassing to the radical anti-slavery leaders. He opposed the "iron-clad" oath, the emancipation of the slaves without compensation to loyal owners, and he championed General Wade Hampton's controversy with General Sherman as to the responsibility for the burning of Columbia. These are only a few instances of many interesting phases of Johnson's public career as set forth in Dr. Steiner's volume.

Johnson's career was well worthy of this valuable biography, which the student of the middle period of the nineteenth century will find to be full of suggestive material.

JAMES A. WOODBURN.

*The Life of Thomas Brackett Reed.* By SAMUEL W. McCALL.

(Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1914.

Pp. xiii, 303.)

THE choice of Mr. McCall to write the official and probably the final biography of Thomas B. Reed, was a happy one. Few men as competent as the author to undertake the task possess so many qualifications for it as he. He had a long personal friendship with the man, was thoroughly familiar, by being a part of it, with the scene of Reed's contests and victories, and had the rare and peculiar merit of continuous political sympathy with him to the end, even in that final crisis when they dissented strongly from that policy of the party to which they both belonged known as "imperialism". Moreover he had access to the many family papers, and to fragmentary diaries, letters, and other literary remains that were never published. It is a pity that Mr. McCall